

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED WAY OF CHITTENDEN COUNTY

• Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and celebrate the United Way of Chittenden County on the occasion of their 60th Anniversary. Many Vermonters have worked tirelessly for this organization throughout the years and I take great pride in what they have accomplished.

Since Henry Way founded the organization under the name of the Burlington Community Chest in 1942, the United Way has brought vital services to generations of Vermonters and earned its reputation as a cornerstone of Chittenden County's collaborative community development.

Vermonters must never take for granted the key role the United Way plays in the well-being of our local communities. Sustainable, grassroots solutions to complex problems do not come easily. In partnership with citizens, businesses, services, State and Federal Government, the United Way helps to fund such worthy organizations as the Girl Scouts, YMCA, Red Cross, Salvation Army, and many more.

Communities throughout the United States are served well by their local United Way chapters. If founders Henry Way, C.P. Hasbrook, and I. Munn Boardman were alive today they would be proud of the organizational strength the United Way has built through the years. I commend the board, staff, contributors, and volunteers for their generous efforts in securing crucial resources for their communities. The legacy of these groundbreaking Vermonters is honored by sixty years of tenacious work. This proud history continues today under the apt leadership of Gretchen Morse. I am sure the United Way of Chittenden County will continue to be an example for other charitable organizations throughout the country.

The United Way is sure to meet their community's challenges in the next 60 years with the vision, leadership and perseverance demonstrated today.

I extend my hearty congratulations.●

DRAWING THE LINE ON GUN VIOLENCE

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to call to the attention of my Senate colleagues, Mr. Hasani Tyus, a junior at Cass Technical High School in Detroit, MI. He has been drawing for years and has won several Motor City Comic Book Convention art awards. Hasani, along with his father, have been honored in a book of outstanding African-Americans for their artwork. Hasani is also a member of several academic societies, is a straight A student and recently earned his black belt in karate. More importantly, Hasani has done what so many young people across the Nation have done in the

years following the Columbine tragedy. He has put his talents to use. He did so by urging us to "Draw the Line on Gun Violence."

Hasani is 1 of 13 national poster contest winners selected from more than 1,000 entries by the Alliance for Justice's Co/Motion Program, a national program that helps community organizations teach youth leaders to become advocates for a cause in their community. Co/motion partners with youth organizations, national service and service learning programs, schools and other community-based organizations to provide training to young adults in advocacy and organizing skills. Further, it empowers young people to take action to effect social change. Co/motion's Drawing the line on Gun Violence Poster Contest, the first of its kind, provided young people the opportunity to express their feelings about the issue of gun violence in a rewarding and artistic way. Hasani's award-winning poster is currently posted on my website (<http://levin.senate.gov>).

I had the pleasure of meeting Hasani earlier this week and I commended him on his hard work and honest depiction of the results of gun violence. I am sure that I speak for many of my Senate colleagues in congratulating Hasani Tyus on a job well done.●

ESSAY BY LELAND MILLER

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, recently I was asked by a constituent of mine, Mr. Marshall Miller, if I would seek to have an essay on Central Asia that was written by his son, Leland, reprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Leland Miller is a second year law student at the University of Virginia. I ask that Mr. Miller's essay be printed in the RECORD.

The essay follows:

KEEPING CENTRAL ASIA'S KLEPTOCRATS AT ARM'S LENGTH (By Leland R. Miller)

As American planes take off from Uzbek airstrips to provide support for the war against the Taliban, another conflict is occurring nearby, underneath the radar of the American media. Kazakhstan, the largest territory in Central Asia, is undergoing a palace coup. Yet few in Washington seem to know or care.

As the only major area on earth that is still "up for grabs," Central Asia may very well become a key geopolitical battleground of the 21st century. This is nothing new. In the early 20th century, British strategist Sir Halford J. Mackinder proclaimed that whoever controls Central Asia has the key to world domination. Yet a century later, it is almost an afterthought in American strategic thinking.

This is a major mistake, the result of two phenomena. First, the war in Afghanistan has convinced U.S. policy makers that the need for support—both rhetorical and substantive—from Central Asian regimes trumps all other considerations.

Second, the promise of the Caspian oil basin and other large business opportunities in the lucrative Central Asian energy markets have seduced Washington into turning a blind eye towards whom we are dealing with.

As a result of these dual factors, America is walking into a dangerous trap. As we open

our arms to these unstable and authoritarian Central Asian regimes, they are gradually gaining the status not just of America's temporary allies but as our friends. This is a disastrous betrayal of U.S. interests. Granted, the promise of quick rewards is enticing. However, like all Faustian bargains, the sacrifice could be considerable.

Perhaps no country sings this siren song more effectively than Kazakhstan. Although it is one of the world's poorest countries, its president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, is ranked as the eighth richest man in the world. The reason? He and his two venal sons-in-law have run Kazakhstan as a family business. The family has sustained itself through gross corruption and the ruthless exploitation of would-be foreign investors.

The Kazakh leaders entice investments or loans, take over the investments under some pretext, then "sell the same horse" again to someone else. With abundant oil, uranium, and other resources, the country always seems able to find another group of gullible suitors. If that fails, pseudo-investments can be induced to cover up money laundering from the Russian mafia.

The recent crisis in Kazakhstan only reinforces this image. It began when Rakhat Aliyev, son-in-law to President Nursultan Nazabayev, was forced to resign his position as deputy chairman of the National Security Committee after reportedly making an Absalom-like run at his father-in-law's authority. He re-emerged just days later as the new head of the presidential guard, seemingly unscathed, but he had driven the first big split in the ruling family. His detractors used this opening to form a new party, Democratic Choice.

While some insiders have suggested that this new group may be nothing less than a second tier of crooks fighting Aliyev for a bigger piece of the pie, the government reacted swiftly. Prime Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev, a Nazarbayev crony, angrily demanded (and received) the resignations of four top cabinet members, all of whom were founding members of the new party. Tokayev's justification?: "All those disagreeing with our policy and wishing to participate in political movements should resign."

Perhaps no one outside of the palace in Astana knows what's really going on. But in the world of Kazakh politics, it matters little whether this battle was an intrafamily fight for power or simply a battle amongst politicians unhappy with the current division of spoils. Either way, this is clearly not a regime that America should be too identified with.

True, Kazakhstan does draw some favorable comparisons, but only when contrasted with its neighbors. The fact is, Central Asian governments are among the most corrupt and repressive regimes in the world. Most inherited the apparatuses of their communist predecessors and many have been just as ruthless in wielding it. Most, like Nazarbayev's and Turkmenbashi's of Turkmenistan, are even extensions of the same communist party structure that they allegedly replaced.

Autocratic and corrupt governance is the rule, not the exception, in Central Asia. The lack of available political channels is so endemic in these countries that frustrated citizens are offered but two choices: attempt to mobilize politically, despite the obvious barriers, or else turn to extra-political means of empowerment.

It is this second possibility that so desperately deserves U.S. attention. Across Central Asia, ethnic and religious differences among the populations constitute a